

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please cancel and replace the Summary of the Invention as follows:

~~In a first family of embodiments, the invention comprehends a personal care article having a longitudinal axis, and comprising a front portion having a front end, a second end, a first side edge, a second side edge, and a fastener receptive area; first and second lateral sections, each having an inner portion, and an outer portion including an outer edge, the outer portion being defined between the fastener receptive area on the front portion and the outer edge of the lateral section, a releasable fastener on the inner portion of the respective lateral section having an inner edge and being releasably fastened to the front portion closer to the longitudinal axis than to the respective outer edge of the corresponding lateral section, the outer portion of each lateral section being attached at at least one attachment site to the front portion inwardly of, but adjacent, the respective one of the first and second side edges of the front portion, the one or more of the at least one attachment sites on the corresponding outer portion, which are closest to the inner edge of the releasable fastener, being closer to the respective side edge of the front portion than to the inner edge of the releasable fastener; a back portion having a back end, a third side edge, and a fourth side edge; and a crotch portion between the front portion and the back portion. Each of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections can be secured to one of the third and fourth side edges of the back portion to form a pant-like article having a waist opening, and first and second leg openings. Strength of the attachment of the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion is less than strength of the securement of the outer portions of the lateral sections to the back portion, whereby the attachments of the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion can be separated from the front portion without separating the securement of the first and second lateral sections from the third and fourth side edges of the back portion.~~

In one aspect of the invention, a personal care article has a longitudinal axis, and includes a front portion having a front end, a second end, a first side edge, a second side edge, and a fastener receptive area. The personal care article also has a first lateral section and a second lateral section, each of the first and second lateral sections having an inner portion, and an outer portion including an outer edge, the outer portion being defined between the fastener receptive area on the front portion and the outer edge of the lateral section. A releasable fastener on the inner portion has an inner edge and is releasably fastened to the fastener receptive area closer to the longitudinal axis than to the respective outer edge of the corresponding lateral section. The outer portion of each lateral section is attached at at least one attachment site to the front portion inwardly of, but adjacent, one of the first and second side edges of the front portion. One or more of the attachment sites on the corresponding outer portion, which are closest to the inner edge of the releasable fastener, are also closer to the respective side edge of the front portion than to the inner edge of the releasable fastener. A back portion of the personal care article has a back end, a third side edge and a fourth side edge. A crotch portion of the personal care article is located between the front portion and the back portion. A strength of attachment at the attachment sites of the outer portions of the first and second

lateral sections to the front portion is sufficiently weak such that the attachment sites can be separated from the front portion to adjust the releasable fastener without substantially fracturing the front portion. Each of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections is secured to one of the third and fourth side edges of the back portion to form a pant-like article having a waist opening, and first and second leg openings. An absorbent core is attached to at least one of the front portion, the back portion, and the crotch portion. The attachment of the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion is formed by at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, thermally activated bonds, hook and loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, and piercing. The first and second lateral sections generally overlie the front portion. Also, the side edges of the first and second lateral sections are aligned in an abutting relationship. The inner edges are joined together at a line of weakness. The strength of attachment of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion is less than strength of the securement of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the back portion, whereby attachment of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion can be separated from the front portion without separating the securement of the first and second lateral sections from the third and fourth side edges of the back portion. Also in this aspect of the invention, the first and second lateral sections are directly secured to respective third and fourth side edges of the back portion, without intervening material between the lateral sections and the back portion. Moreover, the personal care article includes an absorbent core attached to at least one of the front portion, the back portion, and the crotch portion. The attachment at the attachment sites between the outer portions of the lateral sections and the front portion includes at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, hook and loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, piercing, and thermally activated bonding. Also, the first and second lateral sections generally overlie the front portion. The inner edges of the first and second lateral sections are aligned in an abutting relationship in this aspect. The inner edges are joined together at a line of weakness.

In another aspect of the invention, a personal care article includes a front portion having a front end, a second end, a first side edge, a second side edge, and a fastener receptive area; a first lateral section and a second lateral section, each of the first and second lateral sections having an inner portion, and an outer portion including an outer edge, the outer portion being defined between the fastener receptive area on the front portion and the outer edge of the lateral section, a releasable fastener on the inner portion having an inner edge and being releasably fastened to the fastener receptive area on the front portion closer to a longitudinal axis of the personal care article than to the respective outer edge of the corresponding lateral section, the outer portion of each lateral portion being attached at at least one attachment site to the front portion inwardly of but adjacent the respective one of the first and second side edges of the front portion, the one or more of the at least one attachment sites on the corresponding outer portion closest to the inner edge of the releasable fastener being closer to the respective side edge of the front portion than to the inner edge of the releasable fastener, the first and second lateral sections configured to be stretchable relative to the fastener receptive area with the releasable fastener fastened in the fastener receptive area when the personal care article is worn as a pant; a back portion having a back end, a third side edge and a fourth side edge; and a crotch portion between said front portion and said back portion, wherein strength of

attachment at the attachment sites of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion is sufficiently weak such that the attachment sites can be separated from the front portion without fracturing the front portion, the attachment sites when intact configured to stabilize the first and second lateral sections relative to said longitudinal axis, the attachment sites being attached at each lateral portion to stretch away from or toward the longitudinal axis when the personal care article is worn as the pant. Attachment at the attachment sites between the outer portions of the lateral sections and the front portion includes at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, hook-and-loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, piercing, thermally activated bonding, and combinations thereof. The first and second lateral sections overlie a portion of the front portion, each of the first and second lateral sections being free from attachment to the front portion at a free area disposed between the releasable fastener at the respective inner portion and the attachment site adjacent the first and second side edges of the front portion.